Who is Included?

It was taught in a braisa: Everyone is obligated in the reading of the Megillah, whether they be Kohanim, Levi’im, Yisra’elim.

The Gemora asks: Isn’t this obvious?

The Gemora answers: The novelty of this listing is that they must abandon their service in the Temple to come hear the Megillah. This is as Rav Yehudah said in the name of Shmuel: The Kohanim while they were engaged in the Temple service, the Levi’im from the balcony (while they were singing and playing musical instruments) and the Yisra’elim who were standing by the korbanos representing all of Israel (ma’amados), all must forsake their service and go hear the Megillah.

The braisa stated: All may arrange a zimmun (three or more people who ate together are under the obligation to say the Grace after Meals together and recite an extra blessing beforehand), whether they be Kohanim, Levi’im, Yisra’elim.

The Gemora asks: Isn’t this obvious?

The Gemora answers: The novelty of this listing is for the case where the Kohanim eat from terumah or of consecrated foods, while the non-Kohen eats of nonconsecrated foods. I might have thought that since the non-Kohen - even though he wished to eat with the Kohen (from his food), he could not do so; therefore he may not join him (for the zimmun) either; the braisa informs us that granted that the non-Kohen may not eat together with the Kohen, the Kohen could surely eat together with the non-Kohen (and therefore, they may join together). (4a)

Kohanim and Valuations

Our Mishna had stated: All may declare an erach vow, Kohanim, Levi’im, Yisra’elim.

The Gemora asks: But isn’t that obvious?
Rava answers: The novelty of this listing is in accordance with Ben Buchri, for it was taught in a Mishna: Rabbi Yehudah said: Ben Buchri testified at Yavneh that a Kohen who donated a shekel has not committed a sin. [Evidently, he is not obligated to donate the half-shekel. The Gemora in Shekalim derives this from a verse, which indicates that only those who were counted by Moshe in the general census have this obligation; this excludes the Kohanim who were counted by themselves.] Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai said to him: Not so, but rather a Kohen who did not donate the shekel has committed a sin. The Kohanim, however, used to expound the following verse to their advantage: And every minchah offering of a Kohen shall be completely burned; it shall not be eaten. [Now, if they would donate as well, a communal minchah would be partly theirs, and therefore, it would need to be completely burned.] Now, since the omer offering and the two loaves and the lechem hapanim are ours, how can they be eaten? [They therefore did not donate.]

The Gemora asks: But according to Ben Buchri, since they are not in the first place obligated to bring it (the shekel), if one brings it, he should be considered a sinner, for he is bringing nonconsecrated things to the Courtyard?

The Gemora answers: They bring the shekel and hand it over completely to the congregation (and it is therefore consecrated).

Now, I might have thought that since the Torah states: And all your valuations shall be according to the sacred shekel, only he to whom the obligation of the shekel applies is included in the laws of valuation, but as to Kohanim, since the obligation of the shekel does not apply to them, they are not included in the laws of valuation as well; therefore, the Mishna informs us that they are.

Abaye asked him: But the words, ‘And all your valuations’ serve to teach that all your valuations must be no less than one se’la (even if he is too poor for the standard valuation; and therefore, the words are not extra to teach us that Kohanim are not subject to the laws of valuation)?

Rather, said Abaye, the Mishna’s ruling regarding Kohanim is necessary for the following reason: I might have thought that since the Torah states: And those that are redeemed — from a month old shall you redeem them, according to your valuation. This perhaps would teach us that only he to whom the law of redeeming the firstborn applies is included in the laws of valuation, but as to Kohanim, since they are not included in the law concerning redemption of the firstborn, therefore they are not included in the law of valuations; therefore, the Mishna informs us that they are.

Rava asked him: If so, let us consider the asham ram (for one who swore falsely about taking someone else’s money, and afterwards repented), where it is written: And he shall bring his guilt offering to Hashem, a ram without blemish from the flock, according to the proper valuation; let us also argue that only he to whom the law of valuation applies is liable to bring an asham ram, but a tumtum or an androgynous, who is not subject to the law of valuation, is exempt from the obligation to bring an asham ram (where such an exemption would be nonsensical)?

Rather, said Rava, or as some say that Rav Ashi said: the Mishna’s ruling regarding Kohanim is necessary for the following reason: I might have thought that since the Torah states: [if he is too poor] then he shall stand him before the Kohen. Perhaps only a Yisrael is stood up before the Kohen (to be assessed), but not a Kohen before a fellow Kohen; therefore, the Mishna informs us that Kohanim, too, are included in the law of valuation. (4a)

**Scriptural Sources**

The Gemora had stated above that when the Mishna states that ‘all’ are subject to an erech vow, it means to include a repulsive person or one afflicted with boils.

The Gemora asks: From where is this known?

The Gemora cites a braisa: According to your valuation. This includes an unspecified erech vow (which will be explained below).

Another interpretation: According to your valuation. One pays only for the valuation of an entire person, but not for the valuation of his limbs. One might have thought that they exclude the valuation of anything on which the soul is dependent (i.e., a vital organ); therefore it is written: Living beings. Living being, but not a dead person. Perhaps I...
would exclude the dead, but not one who is in the throes of death; therefore it is written: Then he shall stand him... and the Kohen shall evaluate him. Only one who is fit for ‘standing’ can be evaluated, but one who is not fit for ‘standing’ cannot be evaluated.

Another interpretation: Living beings. I could infer only the case of one vowing the erech of one person; from where do I know the case of one vowing the erech of a hundred people? It is written: Living beings.

Another interpretation: Living beings. I could infer only the case of a man vowing the erech of either a man or a woman, but from where do we know the case of a woman vowing the erech of a man, or of a woman vowing the erech of a woman? It is therefore written: Living beings.

Another interpretation: Living beings. That means to include one who is repulsive or afflicted with boils, for one might have thought that since the Torah says: a vow according to your erech - that only such persons as are fit to be made the subjects of a vow (regarding their value), are fit to be made subjects of an erech, and those people who are unfit to be made subjects of a vow, are also unfit to be made subjects of an erech (which would therefore exclude a repulsive person or one afflicted with boils); therefore the Torah informs us: living beings – anyone, no matter who they may be.

The braisa continues: Then the valuation shall be. This includes a tumtum and an androgynous for a damim (their worth on the slave market) vow, for I might have thought that since the Torah states: A vow according to your valuation; perhaps only people who are subject to an erech vow can be subject to a damim vow, but people (such as a tumtum or androgynous) that are not subject to an erech vow (for they are not a definite male or female) cannot be subject to a damim vow as well; therefore the Torah states: The valuation shall be.

The braisa concludes: The male. An erech vow is only for the male but not for a tumtum or an androgynous. One might have thought that they may not be subject to the erech of a man, but that they are subject to the erech of a woman; therefore the Torah states: Then the valuation shall be for the male... and if she is a female — this teaches us that only a definite male or female is subject to an erech vow, but not a tumtum or an androgynous.

The Gemora proceeds to explain the aforementioned braisa: The master had said: According to your valuation. This includes an unspecified erech vow.

A braisa explains an unspecified erech vow: If someone says, “I accept upon myself the obligation of an unspecified erech,” he gives according to the minimum amount possible in valuations. What is the minimum due in valuations? Three shekalim (which is the amount which the Torah prescribes for a female between the ages of one month and five years).

The Gemora asks: But say, perhaps, that he should need to pay fifty shekalim (which is the highest amount)?

The Gemora answers: If you take hold of the larger amount, you may not have taken hold at all, but if you take hold of the lower amount, you have surely taken hold! [By taking the smaller amount, we are not in contradiction with the larger one, and on the contrary, it is included in the larger amount; this is much more preferable than taking the larger which contradicts and is not included in the smaller amount.]

The Gemora asks: Then say, perhaps, that he should only pay one shekel, as it is written: And all your valuations shall be according to the sacred shekel?

The Gemora answers: That verse refers to the case where one cannot afford to pay the amount of his erech vow.

The Gemora asks: What then is the purpose of the Scriptural verse? [Logic dictates that he must pay three shekalim; we cannot demand from him more, and we have proven that he cannot pay less than three!?!]

Rav Nachman answers in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha: It is to teach us that in this case he is not judged according to his means (and he must pay three shekalim even if it is beyond his mean). This is because it is as if he had specified the minimum amount.
Others say: Rav Nachman said in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha that he is judged according to his means. The Gemora notes that this is not obvious, for I might have thought that an unspecified erech vow is considered like an specified statement; therefore we are informed that it is regarded like a poor man’s vow.

The braisa had stated: Another interpretation: According to your valuation. One pays only for the valuation of an entire person, but not for the valuation of his limbs.

The Gemora asks: But you have used this verse to learn the law concerning an unspecified erech vow?

The Gemora answers: Read it as erech (which teaches us regarding the unspecified vow), and the extra suffix at the end of the word teaches the other law.

The braisa had stated: One might have thought that they exclude the valuation of anything on which the soul is dependent (i.e., a vital organ); therefore it is written: Living beings. Living being, but not a dead person.

The Gemora asks: But you have used this verse to learn the law concerning an erech vow on a vital organ?

The Gemora answers: Read it as nefesh (which teaches us regarding a vital organ), and the plural form of the word teaches the other law.

The braisa had stated: Perhaps I would exclude the dead, but not one who is in the throes of death; therefore it is written: Then he shall stand him... and the Kohen shall evaluate him. Only one who is fit for ‘standing’ can be evaluated, but one who is not fit for ‘standing’ cannot be evaluated.

The Gemora asks: But, if so, a dead person should also be excluded from there (for he cannot be stood up)?

The Gemora answers that this is indeed so, and the exposition is really for what we will say later on.

The braisa had stated: Living beings. I could infer only the case of one vowing the erech of one person; from where do I know the case of one vowing the erech of a hundred people? It is written: Living beings. Another interpretation: Living beings. I could infer only the case of a man vowing the erech of either a man or a woman, but from where do we know the case of a woman vowing the erech of a man, or of a woman vowing the erech of a woman? It is therefore written: Living beings. Another interpretation: Living beings. That means to include one who is repulsive or afflicted with boils.

The Gemora asks: But you have used the word (and its plural form) for these other rulings?

The Gemora answers that no Scriptural verses are necessary for these, because each inference is equal (in its ability to derive), therefore, they all may be inferred from one single verse. [The word ‘nefesh’ allows with even logic several inferences: a, male or female may declare or be a subject to an erech vow; a hundred people can be the subject of an erech vow; one can declare an erech vow regarding a vital organ. These inferences are balanced - evenly justified, and not one of them may be inferred exclusively as more logical than the other. But the inclusion of a repulsive or afflicted with boils, which is perhaps somewhat inappropriate because such people cannot be a subject to a damim vow, needed some textual justification, and that is provided by the plural ‘nefashos.’] The verse is necessary to include one who is repulsive or afflicted with boils. (4a – 4b)

**INSIGHTS TO THE DAF**

**Will Megillah Reading be Considered Learning?**

The Gemora learns that one must cease from learning Torah in order to go and hear the Megillah.

The Beis Efraim asked the son of the Noda B’Yehuda as to why this would be considered bitul Torah. Isn’t the reading of the Megillah also considered learning? The Beis Efraim maintains that one who reads the Megillah or listens to it will not be fulfilling a mitzva of studying Torah. The Avnei Neizer (O”C 517) disagrees with him vehemently to such an extent that he writes: “I do not believe that those words
came out of the mouth from such a righteous person as the Beis Efraim.”

Reb Chaim Voloziner talks at great length that there is a concept of neglecting to study Torah in depth and not only time. According to this, the Gemora can be explained to mean that even though reading the Megillah is considered learning, nonetheless it would be regarded as bitul Torah since he is not delving into the depths of Torah; if not for the special halacha that one is obligated to close the Gemora and hear the Megillah.

The Beis Efraim himself speculates that perhaps one cannot fulfill the Mitzva of learning Torah through the reading of the Megillah because it is part of Tefillah. This is based on the viewpoint of the Beis Yosef, who rules regarding one who had forgotten to recite birchas hatorah in the morning. The blessing of Ahava Rabbah can be utilized as a birchas hatorah, providing that he learns immediately after Shemoneh Esrei. The recital of Krias Shema will not be sufficient because that is part of Tefillah. Perhaps, the same logic can be used for the reading of the Megillah.

The Chochmas Shlomo answers that according to those that rule that one needs intent in order for him to discharge his obligation; it is impossible to have in mind for two mitzvos when he is only performing one action.

**DAILY MASHAL**

**We Should Also Be Careful When Eating for a Mitzvah**

By: Meoros HaDaf HaYomi

The Gemara says that we could think that kohanim eating kodoshim are exempt from birkas hamazon and the mishnah emphasizes that this is not so. Meshech Chochmah explains ('Eikev) that this is because birkas hamazon protects from the feeling of frivolity following eating. When the eater blesses and remembers Hashem, he can be sure that he will not rebel on a full stomach. Therefore it would be reasonable to assume that kohanim eating kodoshim are protected from this feeling and wouldn’t have to recite birkas hamazon. The mishnah tells us that this is not so!

Even someone who eats for the sake of a mitzvah must be careful...

**Why Must We Have a Minyan by a Pidyon HaBen?**

Our Gemara proves that there’s a connection between ‘erchin and pidyon haben. It is said in the name of HaGaan Rav M.YL. Zaksh z”l, author of Milei Mordechai, that we can thus explain the ruling of Rabbi Shlomo of London, a Rishon, that we need a minyan for pidyon haben. How do we know this? We can explain that just as by ‘erchin someone who pays with land must bring ten people to estimate its worth (Sanhedrin 15a), the same applies to a pidyon haben, if the father would redeem with something whose worth is unknown, it was therefore regulated that a minyan should be present.